THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Sugar Development Fund provides financial assistance in the form of loan, subject to a maximum of 40% of the cost of project to meet the shortfall in the promoters' contribution at a concessional rate of interest of 2% below the "Bank Rate" to the sugar factories for setting up of plants for production of ethanol from molasses as well as alcohol. In order to ensure that ethanol produced is utilised, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has mandated marketing of 5% ethanol blended with petrol w.e.f. 1.1.2003 in nine States, *viz.*, A.P., Karnataka, T.N., U.P., Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa and in four Union Territories, namely Chandigarh, Pondicherry, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, In the second phase, the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has plans to extend the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme to the rest of the country. Ethanol production depends on its demand and price. Ethanol is manufactured from rectified spirit, the production of whcih has been estimated at 2380 million litres in 2006-07 according to industry sources.

(c) The minimum and maximum selling price of ethanol depends on its demand and supply and other factors affecting price.

Price of Edible Oils

†3068. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the domestic units and owners engaged in the processing of vegetable oil said unanimously that due to increase in the international prices of edible oils in the coming months, prices would increase in the country also;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) whether Government have taken any measures to control the prices, if not, the reasons therefor?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) The remedial measures taken in this regard include:

(i) with effect from 11th August, 2006, customs duty on Crude Palm Oil/Crude Palmolein has been reduced from 80% to 70% and customes duty on Refined Palm Oil/RBD Palmolein has been reduced from 90% to 80%.

(ii) The import duty structure of edible oils is reviewed from time to time.

(iii) Import of edible oils (except coconut oil) has been allowed under Open General License (OGL).

(iv) The prices and availability of edible oils are regularly monitored.

Impact of Import on Prices of Wheat, Pulses and Sugar

3069. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that following the announcement of permission of import of foodgrains by Government the prices of wheat, pulses and sugar have come down;

(b) if so, the respective percentage of decline in prices of the said products from February, 2006 to July, 2006; and

(c) the respective quantity of the above products imported in the country during the aforesaid period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Among the centres which are reporting retail prices of essential commodities, during February 2006 to July 2006, average monthly retail prices of wheat declined at Delhi (8.17%) Lucknow (9.23%), Jaipur (5.57%) and Bhubaneshwar (7.69%); prices of Tur dal declined at Delhi (1.26%), Lucknow (3.13%), Ahmedabad (0.16%) and Chennai (4.83%): and prices of sugar declined at Delhi (3.76%), Lucknow (0.14%), Jaipur (1.29%),